



E-Newsletter

President's Message

Dr Susan Steggall

This will be my last 'message' as President of SWW although I will continue to edit the monthly *e-Newsletters*. I always enjoy the company of SWW members at functions and learning about their writing aspirations and achievements. As Patricia Gaut used to say, it is conversation around the lunch table that is so important for women who have chosen the solitary pursuit of writing.

Over the year we have included comprehensive details of all workshops and talks in our publications. Events have also been advertised in media outlets and on the SWW Facebook page. In part due to these initiatives, in the last few months there has been a gratifying increase in the number of new members joining the Society.

In June award-winning novelist Maggie Joel will be asking: 'Is there still a place for the historical novel in the digital age?' I'm sure many of you will answer with a resounding 'yes' (see page 4 for details of Maggie's impressive CV).

The June Guest Speaker spot will be replaced by a very important event: the Society's Annual General Meeting. A list of those who have nominated appears on page 2. On the same page are details for Virginia Gordon's workshop 'Facing up to Facebook' – a must for all writers who want to stay abreast of the best ways to communicate with readers in the digital world.

The 'Dorothea Mackellar Project' is moving forward and we hope to see work on the new marble plaque for her grave begin soon. Following a comment by Mary Ann Napper, I recently visited the National Arboretum in the ACT, curious to see the sculpture *Wide brown land* – a highly original tribute to Dorothea Mackellar. See page 6 for an article on this sculpture.

While the committee will be changing, the Society's writing culture remains constant and I encourage all members to participate in the 2017 writing competitions. There is still time – although the poetry competition will be closing on 10 June. We have a distinguished array of judges to lend prestige to these initiatives.

Working with the SWW committee of dedicated women of high achievement has made 2016-2017 a year filled with literary excellence and collegiality. I wish the new committee for 2017-2018 all the very best. My annual President's Report – along with the many people I wish to thank for their support – will be published in the July issue of *Women's Ink!*

There are still places available for the SWW Writers' Retreat, on 15-17 September 2017. Go to SWW website for details – <http://womenwritersnsw.org/events/writers-retreat> – and see p.7 for details of the program.

SWW COMPETITIONS 2017 Entry Deadlines

Poetry – 12 June

Short Story – 10 July

Non Fiction – 7 August

Announcement of ALL Prizewinners: 8 NOVEMBER

Entry forms are on SWW website: www.womenwritersnsw.org

Di Yerbury Residency, Entry Deadline: 30 November

Details and entry form will be in the JULY 2017 *Women's Ink!*



Dr Susan Steggall

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2017

14 June:

Workshop-Virginia Gordon
**AGM-Election of 2017-2018
Committee**

Keynote-Maggie Joel

12 July:

Workshop-Libby Hathorn
Open Forum-News Bites
Keynote-Libby Hathorn

9 August:

Workshop-Melinda Smith
Guest Talk-TBA
Keynote-Belinda Murrell

13 September

Workshop-Mark Abernethy
Guest Talk-Olga Chaplin
Keynote-Catherine Marshall

15-17 September:

**SWW Writers' Retreat 'The Brahma Kumaris Centre for Spiritual Learning
Booking Deadline: 30 June**

11 October:

Workshop-Elizabeth Llhuede
Guest Talk-Susan Ramage
Keynote-Emily Maguire

NEXT LITERARY LUNCHEON

Wednesday 14 June 2017

Gallery Room, State Library of NSW

Macquarie Street, Sydney

Program

10.00 – 11.45am Workshop:

‘Facing up to Facebook’

Virginia Gordon

Workshop Coordinator

Robyn McWilliam 0418 225 051

12.00 – 12.20pm: Arrival & Registration

12.20 – 12.45pm: Luncheon

**12.50 pm: AGM and election of 2017-2018
Committee**

1.05-1.35pm: Keynote Speaker

‘Is there a place for historical novels in the digital age?’

Maggie Joel

REMINDER

Bookseller Janet Grundy will be coming to most SWW luncheon events to sell books by our Guest and Keynote Speakers. It's a wonderful way to support your fellow writers!

LUNCHEON AND/OR WORKSHOP

Pay by direct deposit into the SWW bank account by the FRIDAY before the meeting OR you can still pay on the day of the meeting.

Members:

Luncheon \$45 (ML)

Workshop \$30 (MWS)

Luncheon & Workshop \$68 (MLW)

Non Members:

Luncheon \$50 (NML)

Workshop \$40 (NMWS)

Luncheon & Workshop \$83 (NMLW)

*For Direct Deposit please use the codes listed above
The Society of Women Writers' NSW Inc
BSB: 062 018 A/C: 00950433*

**Everyone must book with Lynda Calder BEFORE
10.00am on the MONDAY before the meeting.**

NB: There is a permanent list for bookings if you wish to be on it

Please book by email if you have access to a computer.

Contact Name: SWW Lunch Booking

Email address: swwlunchbooking@gmail.com

Mobile phone: Text message to 0403 177 208

Your text message should be addressed to swwlunchbooking or swwlunch and should contain: date, your name and phone number.



Workshop

Facing up to Facebook'

Virginia Gordon

Learn how to increase your visibility as an author, engage with your audience and increase the opportunity to sell more books.

Virginia is a Corporate Affairs specialist, providing advice to chief executives, senior management and boards. A passionate advocate for artists and creators, their rights and their opportunities, her work has secured tens of millions of dollars for the cultural sector in Australia. Over three decades she has worked with a number of Australia's leading arts and cultural organisations. At the same time, she works with Bookshop Travel who develop writing workshops and tailored experiences with leading Australian authors in overseas locations.



Memo to Members

A reminder that we offer two opportunities for SWW members who cannot attend the monthly lunch meetings. To discuss their work.

Waratah Prose Group

Lynda Calder offered to manage this group but so far has had no response although she set up an online facility. Lynda writes long format, for children and feels that it would be better a short story writer to take on the Group. Lynda can pass on all the necessary information.

alcalder@optusnet.com.au

Kookaburra Poetry Group

In the February e-Newsletter (p.4) there was an article about Jennifer Grant who agreed to coordinate this Group. In brief, those wishing to join, write poems, and then email them to Jennifer who will email the work to each Kookaburra member on the list, asking for a critique on each poem. Responses are emailed back to Jennifer and eventually everyone receives back her poem along with the responses. Any SWW member interested in joining, please contact Jennifer Grant: or 0410978758 or 02 97074235; bookend1948@outlook.com

Annual General Meeting

The Guest Speaker spot in June will be replaced by the AGM.

This is a very important event for the Society so please make every effort to attend. Nominations for positions on the Committee are as follows:

President: Gwen Bitti

Vice-President: Yvonne Jarman

Treasurer: Amanda Mark

Secretary: Charo Devery

Committee members:

Maria McDougall (Membership Secretary)

Janette Conway

Vivienne Foster

Libby Hathorn

Lindsay Lewis

Mary Ann Napper

Welcome to New Members

- Melissa Bruce (theatre director and novelist)
- Dr Sharon Rundle (academic and literary publications, plus short fiction)
- Janina Suzanne (writes a blog and currently, a book)
- Gwen Wilson (published memoir *I belong to no one*, Hachette)

Welcome back to:

- Christiana Star (journalism and non fiction)
-

Coming Events

The Historical Novels Society of Australasia (HNSA) conference is to be held in Melbourne in September 2017 (<http://hnsa.org.au>).

Satellite event in Sydney:

Wednesday 26 July: 'Wings into History: how the past inspires historical fiction' with Justin Sheedy, Winton Higgins, Michelle Morgan and Kim Kelly. Gordon Library 6-8 pm. Bookings: kmc.nsw.gov.au. Enquiries 9424 0120. Cost \$5.

Felicity Pulman, Conference Committee

Keynote Speaker

Is there a place for historical novels in the digital age?

Maggie Joel

Maggie Joel is a British-born writer. She worked for a number of years in the marketing and events industry in London before moving to Australia in the early 1990s. She completed a BA (Media Studies) and a MA (Literary Theory and Creative Writing) at Macquarie University and became an Australian citizen in 1998. Maggie's short stories have been published in *Southerly*, *Westerly*, *Island*, *Overland* and *Canberra Arts Review*, and broadcast on ABC radio. Her first novel, *The Past and Other Lies*, (Australia and NZ Murdoch Books 2009; in the US Felony & Mayhem Press 2013) was chosen as the *Sydney Morning Herald's* 'Pick of the Week'. Her second novel, *The Second-Last Woman in England* (Murdoch Books in Australia & NZ, 2010, in the US in 2011; UK by Constable & Robinson in 2013), was also selected as the *Sydney Morning Herald's* 'Pick of the Week' and was awarded the 2011 FAWs' Christina Stead Award for Fiction. Maggie's third novel, *Half the World in Winter*, was published in 2014 and in the UK in 2015. Her fourth novel, *The Safest Place in London*, was published by Allen & Unwin in 2016. <http://maggiejoel.com/>
Contact: speaktotheauthor@hotmail.com



Member News

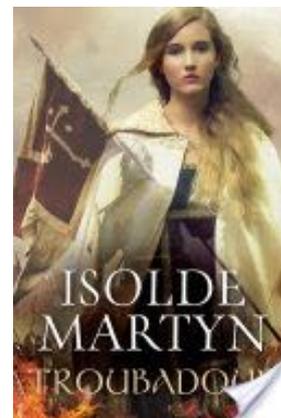
• **Melissa Bruce**, debut novel *Picnic at Mount Disappointment* (Ginninderra Press 2017).

Fifteen-year-old Lucy moves with her new stepfamily from the city to the country to a farm situated at the foot of Mount Disappointment.



Melissa was awarded a mentorship by the Australian Society of Authors to develop this novel.

• **Isolde Martyn**, new novel *Troubadour* (Harlequin Mira) set during the Albigensian Crusade against southern France in 1209.



STAY CONNECTED!

Keep up with what's happening at the SWW NSW on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
Just search for 'The Society of Women Writers NSW Inc.'





If you wish to contribute a member notice, please email your text and image as a JPEG file to: swal1@bigpond.net.au

With 'ATTN: SWW E-Newsletter editor' in subject heading.

The deadline for e-Newsletter submission is the 20th of each month.

Any late submissions will be held for the following month.

The Society of Women Writers NSW Committee and Team for 2016-2017

Committee: Dr Susan Steggall – President,
Yvonne Jarman – Vice-President,
Amanda Mark – Treasurer,
Charo Devery – Secretary, Maria
McDougall – Membership Secretary,
Gwen Bitti, Vivienne Foster, Libby Hathorn, Lindsay
Lewis, Mary Ann Napper, Wendy Searle

E-Newsletter team – Dr Susan Steggall (Editor) &
Lindsay Lewis

Website Manager – Lindsay Lewis

LinkedIN Group Manager – Dr Maria Hill

SWW Face Book Manager – Susanne Gervay **SWW**

Front Desk – Lynda Calder

Workshop Convenor – Robyn McWilliam.

Women's INK! Team – Margaret Zanardo (Editor),
Dr Susan Steggall (Sub-Editor), Sandra Davis, Judith
O'Connor (Book Editor), Joy Williams.

Correspondence:

Secretary, Society of Women Writers NSW Inc

GPO Box 1388 Sydney NSW 2001

www.womenwritersnsw.org



SWW Retreat: Presenter Snapshots

- **Beverley George** is a renowned poet both nationally and internationally in her field of Japanese poetry. She is a Writing Fellow of *The Fellowship of Australian Writers*, past editor of *Yellow Moon* 9-20; 2000-2006, *The Society of Women Writers NSW Newsletter* 2004-06 and *Eucalypt: a Tanka Journal* 1-21; 2006-16. She has edited *Windfall: Australian Haiku* since 2013. She was president of the Australian Haiku Society 2006-10 and has served as an international judge for Japanese poetry competitions in Japan, UK and Canada. Her haiku collection *Spinifex* was published by Pardalote Press in 2006 and recently her haiku chapbook *The Birds that Stay* was featured as 'book of the week' by The Haiku Foundation [US].
- Awarded the Lifetime Social Justice Literature Award by the International Literacy Association, **Susanne Gervay** OAM is an award winning children's author recognised for her youth literature and writing on social justice, and her children and picture books for their engagement with disability, inclusion, multiculturalism and peace. The *I Am Jack* books – a rite-of-passage on school bullying – have been adapted into a play by Monkey Baa Theatre and is in development as a TV series. Susanne is a Writer Ambassador for Room to Read and is head of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators, Australia East and New Zealand.
- **Libby Sommer's** debut novel, *My Year With Sammy* (Ginninderra Press 2015) was published to great acclaim. The book was Spectrum's Pick of the Week in January 2016 and winner of the Society of Women Writers Fiction Book Award 2016. Libby's second novel, *The Crystal Ballroom* will be published in winter 2017. More than thirty of Libby's short stories have appeared in literary journals and anthologies including *Quadrant* and *Overland*. She has taught Creative Writing at City East Community College Sydney and at Camp Creative in Bellingen.

THE DOROTHEA MACKELLAR PROJECT

In 2017 Dorothea Mackellar became the first female writer honoured by UNESCO's Australian Memory of the World when the manuscript of 'My Country' was included in the Register of Australian Literature. Yet those who commissioned the headstone on her grave when she died in 1968 were not so concerned about perpetuating her legacy. On a visit to Waverley Cemetery in 2016, Libby Hathorn discovered that the inscriptions in the Mackellar family plot did not mention Dorothea's achievements as a poet, let alone note the importance of her poem 'My Country', first published in London in 1908.

Libby approached the historic site management at Waverley Cemetery and then requested SWW support for an initiative to give due recognition to Dorothea Mackellar. After discussions with the Waverley Trust, the Society submitted an application to add a marble slab to define Dorothea as a poet and have engraved on the headstone the famous eight lines of her poem beginning with 'I love a sunburnt country', and ending with 'The wide brown land for me'.

A few weeks ago when in Canberra, I visited the National Arboretum, in search of a sculpture entitled *Wide brown land* (2010) – a highly original tribute to Dorothea Mackellar. From a distance it looked like a giant, rust-orange earthworm slithering across the top of a grassy knoll near the Himalayan cedar forest. The form and style of the thirty-five metre-long and three-metre-high sculpture, made from Corten steel and steel rod, were inspired by Mackellar's handwriting.

Futago, a multi-disciplinary design studio in Hobart that specialises in public art, had invited writer Chris Viney and sculptor Marcus Tatton to develop ideas, on a small scale for a Canberra shopping centre. *Wide brown land* was then scaled up at the request of Arts ACT for its current spectacular position at the National Arboretum. Born in New Zealand, now based in Tasmania, Marcus Tatton is a public space sculptor who explores the relationship between natural and non-natural environments and how humans interact with those environments. *Wide brown land* is not site specific in that it does not pay homage to, or critique, some aspect of its actual location. However, in a wider sense it stands for the entire Australian continent in keeping with the sentiments evoked in Mackellar's poem.

Sculpture as poetry, poetry as sculpture, brings to mind the work of Scottish artist Ian Hamilton Finlay who, during the 1960s created 'concrete poetry' – sculpture in which the layout and typography of words and letters in three-dimensional form were all important. Finlay explored the possibilities of synthesising word and image to create three-dimensional visual-verbal poems.* *Wide brown land*, stretching across the hilltop pays tribute to 'My Country' both visually and verbally. Standing in front of the sculpture, or walking around it, gives viewers an opportunity to reflect on their own relationship to the landscape – and to the poem.

Having paid the deposit for the new marble plaque the Society has begun a fund raising drive and I urge all members to make a contribution, no matter how small, to honour one of Australia's literary greats.

* Amy Dempsey, *Destination Art / Land Art / Site-specific Art / Sculpture Parks*, (revised and expanded edition, Thames & Hudson, London, 2006, p.70



Photograph, Susan Steggall May 2017



Photograph, Susan Steggall May 2017

Society of Women Writers Retreat

‘Spinning Straw to Story Gold’

[Thank you Libby Hathorn for the title]

15 – 17 September 2017

Brahma Kumaris Centre for Spiritual Learning
150 Macarthur Drive
Wilton NSW

What you will enjoy in a tranquil bush setting:

- 2 x nights twin-share accommodation, meals – 2 x breakfasts, 2 x dinners, 2 x lunches, 2 x morning teas and 1 x afternoon tea
- Guided meditative bushwalks
- Attendance at all program sessions

Opportunity:

1. Have your first ten (10) pages critiqued by publisher, **Catherine Milne** (*bookings essential. * Ring or email Gwen or Jan for cost – limited places*)
2. Your first page critiqued by **Susanne Gervay**
3. Open Mic - Read 300 words in any genre.

Friday 15 September

- 4.00 – 6.00pm Registration
6.30 – 7.50pm Dinner
8.00 – 8.15pm Welcome and Housekeeping
8.15 – 9.15pm **KEYNOTE – 13 Lessons from 13 years as a published writer**
with **Emily Maguire**

Saturday 16 September

- 09.30 – 10.30am **KEYNOTE – In the Flow** with **Libby Hathorn**
10.45 – 12.15pm **WORKSHOP** (choose one)
(a) ‘Haiku’, with Beverley George
(b) ‘Writing from within’, with Libby Sommer
(c) ‘The essential pitch’, with Susanne Gervay
1.45 – 2.15pm **OPEN MIC** (*booking essential*)
2.15 – 3.15pm **WORKSHOP – Your first page** with **Susanne Gervay**
3.45 – 5.00pm Personal writing time/reflection
5.00 – 6.30pm **PRESENTATION – What publishers want.** with **publisher Catherine Milne, Harper Collins** followed by Q & A panel
8.00 – 9.00pm Shared writing/networking (*form own groups*)
9.00 – 9.30pm **Guided Deep Relaxation** with **Gwen Bitti**

Sunday 17 September

- 09.30 – 10.30am **WORKSHOP – Spinning Straw to Story Gold – Ideas to Stories**
with **Libby Hathorn**
10.45 – 11.45am **IN CONVERSATION** with **Kathryn Heyman**
12.15 – 1.30pm Lunch
1.30 – 2.00pm Official Farewell from Brahma Kumaris Co-ordinator
2.00pm Departure

Retreat Director: Gwen Bitti, email: gwen.swwretreat@bigpond.com or mobile: 0403 165 925

Retreat Secretary: Jan Conway email: (as for Gwen) or mobile: 0402 755 768